

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: CONCERN EXPRESSED OVER NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULED
TURKISH MANEUVERS IN THE AEGEAN

REF: (A) ATHENS 7346 (B) ANKARA 6975

1. NEXT WEEK'S AIR AND SEA EXERCISES SCHEDULED BY TURKEY
IN THE EASTERN AEGEAN HAVE PROVOKED WIDE SHOW OF CONCERN IN
GREEK PRESS. ALMOST ALL ATHENS NEWSPAPERS FEBRUARY 18 CARRY
THE STORY AS A MAJOR ITEM. THE REPORTS STRESS THE FACT THAT
THE TURKISH MANEUVERS--SCHEDULED TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 26--WILL
BE CARRIED OUT VERY CLOSE TO GREEK ISLANDS AND THAT NATO IS
CONCERNED THAT "EPISODES" COULD OCCUR WHICH MIGHT
RESULT IN CONTACT BETWEEN THE PARTICIPATING TURKISH
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FORCES AND "WATCHING" GREEK FORCES.

2. ALL PAPERS APPEAR TO BASE THEIR REPORTS ON INFORMATION PUBLISHED RECENTLY IN THE ISTANBUL GREEK LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER APOYEVMATINI. THIS LATTER JOURNAL ASSERTED THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF A PROVOCATIVE "EPISODE" IS HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT THE TURKISH AIRCRAFT INVOLVED IN THE EXERCISE WILL APPROACH GREEK ISLANDS AT A DISTANCE OF LESS THAN TEN MILES. (NOTE: GREECE HAS SINCE 1931 CLAIMED A TEN MILE AIR SPACE AROUND ITS ISLANDS WHEREAS IT ONLY ASSERTS A SIX MILE TERRITORIAL SEA.) THE TURKISH NEWSPAPER MAKES THE POINT THAT THESE AERIAL EXERCISES WILL CONSTITUTE "THE FIRST OCCASION" WHEREIN TURKISH AIRCRAFT WILL CARRY OUT PLANNED FLIGHTS WITHIN THAT TEN MILE ZONE. MOST OF THE GREEK PRESS ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE RECENT AND SUDDEN VISIT OF NATO COMMANDER ALEXANDER HAIG TO ANKARA IS RELATED AT LEAST PARTIALLY TO HIS AND NATO'S CONCERN OVER THE UPCOMING TURKISH MANEUVERS.

3. SEVERAL OFFICIALS OF THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTRY HAVE DISCUSSED WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS IN RECENT MONTHS THE TEN MILE TERRITORIAL AIR SPACE WHICH GREECE HAS ASSERTED SINCE 1931. THEY HAVE ALLEGED THAT TURKEY HAS ALWAYS ACCEPTED AND RESPECTED THIS TEN MILE ZONE AND THAT THERE ARE VERY MANY COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ACKNOWLEDGING THIS UNDERSTANDING. HOWEVER, THE TURKS BEGAN TO QUESTION ITS APPLICABILITY DURING ROUND ONE OF THE FIR TALKS HELD IN ANKARA LAST JUNE (REFTEL A). THEN, JUST PRIOR TO THE THIRD ROUND OF THE BILATERAL FIR TALKS, THE TURKS NOTIFIED THE GOG THAT TURKEY COULD NO LONGER ACCEPT THE TEN MILE CONCEPT FOR AIR SPACE OVER THE GREEK ISLANDS OF THE AEGEAN. (NOTE: EMBASSY ANKARA REPORTED LATE LAST SUMMER (REFTEL B), THAT A TURKISH MFA OFFICIAL ASSERTED THAT WHILE THE GOT NEVER ACCEPTED THE 1931 GOG PROCLAMATION OF A TEN MILE AIR SPACE FOR ITS ISLANDS, IT ADMITTEDLY HAD NOT OFFICIALLY PROTESTED IT EITHER.)

4. REPRESENTATIVE HEADLINES OF GREEK PRESS ON THIS ISSUE FOLLOW: KATHIMERINI (INDEPENDENT, PRO-GOVERNMENT) "CONCERNS ARE EXPRESSED IN NATO CIRCLES AS TO TURKISH AERIAL EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN SIX MILES FROM THE GREEK ISLANDS"; ATHINAIKI
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(LEFT-OF-CENTER, PRO-PASOK) "TURKISH EXERCISES IN GREEK WATERS"; TO VIMA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) "A NEW TEST IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS: TURKISH EXERCISES INSIDE THE AIR SPACE OF GREECE"; TA NEA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) "ON 26 FEBRUARY ANKARA THREATENS TO VIOLATE THE AEGEAN"; ACROPOLIS (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) "TURKISH EXERCISES WITH SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT NEAR OUR ISLANDS: NATO FEARS EPISODES".

5. FOR USNMR SHAPE AND USMISSION NATO: WE WOULD WELCOME
YOUR COMMENTS ON THESE REPORTS.
KUBISCH

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